

PROFILE

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A Newsletter of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida

August 15, 1988



Rebecca A. Acosta (l), winner of the John W. Herbert Scholarship, is pictured with Mr. Herbert's wife and son, Mrs. John W. Herbert and Brian Herbert, and Rebecca's parents, Julieta and Regino Acosta. Serina Maxwell, winner of the Hilary A. Schroder Scholarship, is pictured with her mother, Betty Maxwell, and with Mr. Schroder's son and daughter-in-law, Don and Elsie Schroder.

Plan awards two college scholarships

As living memorials to two former presidents of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida who passed away in 1987, the corporation has awarded two scholarships to children of employees.

Rebecca Acosta, daughter of Regino and Julieta Acosta, received the John W. Herbert Scholarship, which is reserved for attendance at the University of North Florida. Mr. Herbert joined the Plan in 1948 and retired in 1979 after 31 years of service.

Serina Maxwell, daughter of Johnny and Betty Maxwell, received the Hilary A. Schroder scholarship, which may be used for attendance at any accredited college or university in Florida. Mr. Schroder was one of the founders of the Plan and served for 24 years, from 1946 until he retired in 1970.

The yearly awards are for \$3,000 each. Recipients must plan to pursue a four-year degree in health care, business administration, economics, or a health care-related field.

The winners were chosen by a service of the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, on the bases of academic accomplishment, leadership, and participation in scholastic and community activities.

Each year, the Plan will award two new, four-year scholarships to dependent children of employees who have at least five years of continuous employment with BCBSF.



Medicare A employees sell home baked goods to help the United Way

Brenda Hinton (l-r), Debbie Barnett, Karen Torley, Linda Thompson, Karen Wise, Carolyn Wennerstrom and every other Medicare Part A employee decided to help the United Way in a personal way. They sold homemade goodies and raised more than \$1,300.

Customer Service

"Great job" on Reimbursement Guide

Louise Byrd, office manager for a Jacksonville doctors' group, praised the Plan's new Reimbursement Guide for physicians, which was prepared by staff members in Health Industry Services and Private Business Operations. "This book is by far the most complete book Blue Shield has ever published," she wrote.

"Exceptional character"

Helen and Edward Hayduk praised **Mary Ann Briley** (Customer Service Representative, Miami) for having excep-

tional character, a high degree of efficiency, pleasantness, knowledge of her job, and a capacity to deal with the public. . . "Give us Ms. Briley every time," they said.

"A wonderful employee"

Subscriber Ida Opensky lauded **Miriam Baldrich** (Customer Service Representative, Miami) for showing "tremendous patience, courtesy, efficiency and understanding."

Helping each other

Jan Decatur, marketing representative in Tampa, appreciates **Nona Stanley** (Senior Membership and Billing Representative) and **Mary Mitchell** (Group Account Specialist, Membership and Billing). "Whenever there is something that needs to

be corrected or taken care of, I know I will get immediate results when Nona and Mary are contacted," she wrote.

Plaudits for FEP Correspondence

Customer Service Representatives in FEP Correspondence have served customers well. W.R. Sauerbrun, Jr. wrote, "I would rate your service, overall, as excellent . . . (and) **Cathy Roberts** was fantastic, most helpful."

Judie Benwick of Info-Med in Jacksonville wrote, "When **Veronica Williams** promises to take care of something, I know I can count on it being done." Thomas Schropp of Palm Harbor thanked **Nancy Pierce**, saying, "It is refreshing to receive prompt, complete and easily understood correspondence."

The office manager for VitalCare of Florida in Longwood wrote, "I call the customer service department about five times a week. Often, I feel I am being rushed . . . (but with **Murvel Drayton**) it is very refreshing to encounter someone who takes his job seriously and is willing to go the extra mile."

Edward Ellis of Newport, R.I. wrote to **Amy Dyches**, "You were kind, courteous and helpful . . . It was refreshing . . ." Subscriber Shirley Drucks praised **Debbie Wilkes** and her supervisor, **Mavis Bush**, when she wrote, "My problem was handled with a reassuring manner and compassion from the employee. It is wonderful to know that there are loyal and dedicated people who care. Your employee's efficiency reflects the sign of a good supervisor!"



Praised for their service: (l-r) Mary Ann Briley (inset), Nona Stanley, Mary Mitchell, Cathy Roberts, Veronica Williams, Murvel Drayton, Nancy Pierce, Debbie Wilkes, Amy Dyches. Miriam Baldrich is on maternity leave. Donna McClure's (PAS, Ft. Lauderdale) photo (right inset) was unavailable for the August 1 Profile.

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Frank Dorman, Editor
Printing, Corporate Print Shop

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ARA's new cook caters to quality

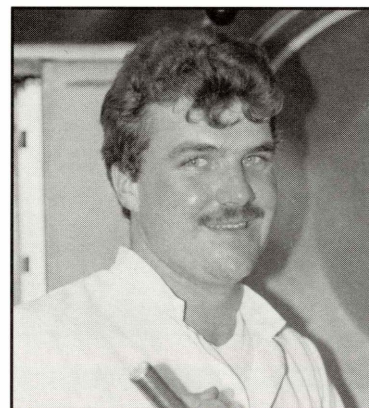
If home office employees have noticed an improvement in their cafeterias of late, it's probably due largely to Richard Cummings, the new cook for ARA Services, Inc.

He says he's really not a chef, but that's what everyone in the kitchen calls him, probably because of how his food tastes. He says it's just a matter of cooking "the way it should be done."

Cummings has spent 12 years around food, including service in some Jacksonville kitchens like those of Morrison's, St. Luke's Hospital and the River Club.

Anyone who hasn't had the pleasure should try the lasagna, clam chowder, veal cordon bleu, or the freshly carved

whole turkey. They're well worth a trip through the line.



Richard Cummings

Medicare B Provider Education gives physicians clear, focused information

Doctors' offices rely upon BCBSF to keep them up-to-date on everything they need to know about Medicare. It's a large amount of complicated information and it changes constantly.

Answering the need, the Medicare Part B Provider Education Department (PED) has enhanced the way the corporation delivers information.

Since PED was created in January, enhancements have included new, specialized publications written with provider input, seminars and workshops throughout the state, and specialists assigned to key providers.

With a focus on educational programs, PED's purpose is to foster understanding of the Medicare program.

"Our role is to be the advocate for the provider, our 'customer,'" PED manager Karen Farmer said.

External

One way they're fulfilling that role is the Medicare Part B Quarterly Update, a publication that covers Medicare issues, program changes, reimbursement data, and other items that formerly were included in the Florida Health Care Times that's published bimonthly by HIS Communications.

Specialty bulletins, released several times per month, contain information of interest only to particular groups, such as radiologists, anaesthesiologists, emergency room physicians, etc.

These and other publications are cost-effective because they reach the right audiences (usually a few thousand) with timely, pertinent information, rather than sending all Medicare news to all of the 60,000 health care providers who receive the Update.

PED staff members are developing a comprehensive guide book to tell them everything they need to know about dealing with Medicare, such as how to prepare claims, how claims are processed, and how to get a hearing.

PED also has given providers laminated fact sheets with phone numbers to call for specific types of information.



Medicare Part B Provider Education Department staff members are (seated, l-r) secretary Donna Pacifico, manager Karen Farmer, senior educational specialist Joan Baagoe, (standing) educational specialists Terry Little, Eric Palmer and Christine Somers, and senior educational specialist Tom Williams.

Enhancing the credibility of each publication is the "prior comment" process, in which officers of various state health care organizations review the news before it's published. This enhances readability and understanding.

To rapidly convey especially timely news from the Health Care Financing Administration, PED has a "Quick Alert" program. Staff members contact key persons in hospitals, medical societies and health care organizations, who then can pass the information along to the right persons. PED follows this with detailed information in its publications.

Other educational vehicles are seminars and workshops presented in large metropolitan areas for insurance clerks, office managers and secretaries; consultations with providers at BCBSF's home office; and tours of Medicare work areas. PED also is preparing a video to help familiarize customers with Medicare Part B, Farmer said.

In its "Adopt a Provider" program, PED assigns specialists to key providers in order to learn their needs and to determine what both parties can do to improve the relationship.

Internal

PED also keeps Florida Plan employees informed about Medicare. "We update our customer service phone representatives to ensure that they're giving our customers accurate, current information," Farmer said.

The Medicare Part B Q&A Clipboard answers questions frequently asked by providers, helping to ensure that employees in Medicare B operational areas respond accurately to provider inquiries. (Twenty-five employees currently receive an average of 100 calls each per day.)

The Calendar of Events notifies all Medicare Part B management of out-of-town workshops and upcoming visits by provider personnel.

Providers have responded well to the new programs and publications, but PED will continue to do whatever they can to better inform them.

"We work hard to make the program understandable to our customers," Farmer said.

Richards works to become an actuary through Florida Plan's student program

Six years ago, Robert Richards came to work for BCBSF hoping to become an actuary. If all goes well, he should make it in three more years.

Richards, an actuarial analyst, recently became an Associate of the Society of Actuaries by passing the fifth in a series of 10 examinations (he also passed the sixth exam).

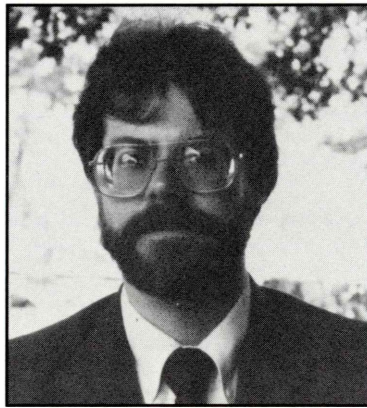
Richards hopes to become a Fellow of the Society, a full-fledged actuary, in 1991. When he does, he'll be the Florida Plan's first "home grown" actuary, one who has completed the arduous process while employed by the corporation.

Richards said that one reason he joined the Plan was that it was developing a student program to provide financial assistance and allow time for study.

It requires study at work, at least three hours each weeknight and fulltime on weekends for three-to-four months before exams, which are given twice a year. Also, there are seminars, usually at Georgia State University in Atlanta, some of which take from one to two weeks.

Frank Amrine, associate actuary, said

that it would be extremely difficult for a fulltime employee to complete the learning process without a company program. Each test requires 300 to 400 hours of



Robert Richards

study, and it normally takes an average of eight years to pass them all, he said.

"Because it takes such a commitment on the part of an individual, a company program of both financial and time assistance is imperative," Amrine said.

Some Plans do not have student programs, especially in the Southeast.

"We should congratulate ourselves as

a company, and Robert as an individual," said Judy Discenza, vice president and Actuary, lauding the program and Richards' "incredible achievement."

As a Fellow, he'll be one of a relative few actuaries in the nation, calculating such things as insurance risk, premiums, employee benefits, pensions, etc.

As a comparison, in 1986 there were 945,000 accountants in the country, 317,000 of them CPAs; there were 535,000 physicians, 527,000 attorneys and 9,400 actuaries.

Five employees are Fellows of the Society of Actuaries: Discenza, Amrine, Actuary David Bahn, HOI Actuary David Llewellyn, and Ed O'Neil, vice president of Group Marketing.

Richards said that his study materials would be more difficult to understand without the opportunity he's had to learn their practical application while working at BCBSF.

Having once left college and spent four years as a radio disc jockey, Richards is sure that all of his years of hard work and study will pay off. You might say he's counting on it.

New programmers complete training

This photo proves that EDP Training Coordinator Jim McRae was right. Computer programmers do lean to the left.

The brain's left side is said to house analytical thought, which now fills the heads of 12 employees who recently completed an intensive COBOL computer programming course offered by BCBSF.

The rigorous training included four-hour classes held twice a week for 14 weeks, 16 hours of extra classroom work, four hours of homework, and many examinations.

The students were assigned three times the course work that some colleges normally prescribe with the same textbook, McRae said.

Graduates shown with him (front row, l-r) are Anna Guy, Filomena Isla,



(2nd row) Nelson Humphrey, Gary Brown, Larry Burton, Penny Smith, Wayne Pollard, (3rd) Cathleen Corcoran,

Rebecca Shaw, Denise Orr, Veronica White and Karen Edwards.